

SITUATION REPORT NO. 34
INCIDENT NO. 97-015
DATE: APRIL 30, 1997 TIME: 12:00 P.M.

TO: Governor Edward T. Schafer
State Capitol
Bismarck, ND 58505

1. NATURE OF DISASTER: Spring flood statewide.
2. DEATHS AND INJURIES: To date, seven people have died as a result of problems created by the winter storm and flooding.
3. DAMAGES: The Pembina River at Neche is holding steady within the dikes at 23.3 feet late April 29, a 0.6-foot drop during the past 24 hours. The river had crested at 25.1 feet on April 22, exceeding the 1979 flood-of-record of 23.6 feet. Cold, windy and rainy weather on April 29 caused waves to wash onto the top of the dikes. City officials were developing evacuation plans in case the dikes were overtopped. In Drayton, high winds were blowing the plastic covering off dikes. In Leroy, the main road is still inundated. The town's 20 residents were evacuated earlier this week.

The National Weather Service reports that the Red River at Pembina and Drayton continues above flood record levels set in 1979. The river at Pembina was at 54.36 feet on April 30, a 0.24-foot decrease during the past 24 hours. The flood-of-record level was 53.8 feet. The river crested at Pembina at 54.94 feet on April 26; flood stage is 42 feet. The river at Drayton had dropped 0.27 feet during the past 24 hours to 44.03 feet. The flood-of-record level is 43.7 feet. The river crested at Drayton at 45.55 feet on April 25; flood stage is 32 feet. Upstream in Grand Forks, where the gauge is out of service, the National Weather Service estimates the river level was at 44.96 feet on April 29, dropping 1.24-feet during the past 24 hours. The river at Grand Forks had crested at 54.2 feet on April 22; flood stage is 28 feet. In Fargo, the river was at 33.42 feet, a 0.88-foot decrease during the past 24 hours. The river reached 39.64 feet on April 18; flood stage is 17 feet. In Wahpeton, the river has receded to 14.02 feet, a 0.38-foot decrease during the past 24 hours. The river had crested twice at 19.2 feet on April 5 and April 18; flood stage is 10 feet.

To date, 26,505 North Dakotans have registered damages with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) National Teleregistration Center. Of those, 11,416 have applied for the Individual and Family Grant Program for necessary and serious needs not covered by insurance or other disaster recovery programs.

As of April 28, more than \$3.7 million in FEMA disaster housing assistance checks have been issued to more than 5,100 North Dakotans affected by flooding. The Small Business Administration has approved \$588,400 in disaster loans as of April 28. These loans help homeowners, renters and businesses rebuild after a disaster.

4. RESOURCES:

LOCAL: No change from the first report.

STATE: No change from the first report.

FEDERAL: No change from the first and second reports.

5. VOLUNTEER ACTION: The “Unmet Needs Task Force,” comprised of church organizations, met April 29 to continue planning efforts to meet those needs of North Dakotans who do not qualify for available assistance programs.

The American Red Cross housed 587 evacuees at its four shelter locations on April 27-28. The relief agency serviced 10,656 meals to evacuees and flood fighters.

6. MAJOR ACTIONS: As flood waters recede, utility company workers are restoring power to Grand Forks residents. Before power can be restored to a flooded home, gas and/or electrical connections must be inspected. The city of Grand Forks plans to hire approximately 40 additional inspectors to supplement its 10-member inspection staff. Structural engineers will check structural soundness of flooded homes, mechanical inspectors will examine sewer and water connections, natural gas inspectors will check gas connections, and electrical engineers will inspect a home’s electrical system. For homes that fail to meet code, temporary electrical service will be provided with ground fault interrupter boxes designed to support minimal service. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is helping to coordinate restoration of power.

Grand Forks city officials plan to open the downtown area to the public on April 30, but will continue to restrict access to some areas along the river. The only curfew in effect is for areas east of Washington, from 9 p.m. until 6 a.m. The Kennedy Bridge between Grand Forks and East Grand Forks was reopened on April 29. The mayor has ordered that all Civic Auditorium activities and events are canceled until further notice.

The N.D. Department of Health reports that the city water plant may be operational April 30 or May 1. However, problems with water break lines will delay restoration of service. A four-member Centers for Disease Control and Prevention environmental assessment team met with Grand Forks and United Hospital officials on April 29 to discuss plans for water restoration. Although water connections have been made from the plant to the hospital, the system has not been pressurized.

In Grand Forks, most of the water that inundated the Civic Auditorium and the Police Department has been pumped out. The task promises to take longer at Grand Forks city Hall, where ground water keeps infiltrating the building.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will begin efforts to remove debris, as well as dikes, from Grand Forks by May 2.

The N.D. State Water Commission (SWC) expects to complete breaching the Iverson Dam near Leeds by April 30. The SWC began a controlled breach of the 30-acre-foot dam after it developed a structural problem on April 24, forcing the evacuation of some of Leeds' 450 residents. Benson County road crews, in conjunction with the SWC, made emergency repairs to the dam, which had held 20 feet of water.

The N.D. Department of Health has ordered 10,000 bottles of waterless hand washing solution for Grand Forks area residents.

The N.D. National Guard anticipates reductions later this week in personnel supporting the flood fight in the Red River Valley. As of April 29, National Guard had 730 members on duty, performing flood recovery work in Cass, Grand Forks, Logan, McIntosh, McLean, Pembina, Traill and Walsh Counties. The National Guard has 44 missions in progress, two pending and 233 completed.

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: No change from previous reports.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER: North Dakota residents with disaster-related damages can apply for individual assistance programs by contacting the National Teleregistration Center (NTC) at (800) 462-9029. The N.D. Department of Agriculture operates an Agriculture Disaster Response Center for farmers coping with damages and losses caused by the disaster. The toll-free number is (888) 337-8632. Job Service North Dakota has received approval for Disaster Unemployment Assistance. Applicants are asked to call their local Job Service office or call (800) 472-2222.

The Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports for the spring flood, Devils Lake flood and winter storm are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/dem>". The N.D. State Water Commission posts flood-related information on its Internet home page. The address is "<http://water.swc.state.nd.us>". The N.D. Department of Agriculture also posts flood-related information on its home page. The address is: "<http://www.state.nd.us/agr/>". The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a "Water Control Home Page" at "<http://www.ncs-wc.usace.army.mil>". The U.S. Geological Survey's Internet home page address is: "<http://srv1dndbmk.cr.usgs.gov/public/>".

Douglas C. Friez, State Director